

# Chemical Safety

## FOLLOW THE SAFETY FORMULA

**M**ake sure you understand the hazards of any chemicals to which you may be exposed. Follow all safety precautions to the letter, to protect yourself and others.

- Keep your work area clean and orderly to prevent chemical accidents.
- Do not keep more chemicals in your area than you need — only the amount required for the job.
  - Chemicals must be kept in approved, covered containers. Keep these containers closed when not in use.
  - Provide the required ventilation and temperature for areas where chemicals are handled or stored.
  - Keep sources of ignition away from chemicals that are being used or stored.
  - Know what to do in case of a spill emergency. If you are authorized and qualified to clean up the spill, do so promptly. Otherwise, follow emergency procedures, which may include alerting emergency crews, evacuating the area and removing ignition sources.
  - Know what to do in case of chemical exposure. Call for medical help immediately. If the eyes or skin have been contacted by the chemical, flush with water for at least 20 minutes. If someone has inhaled chemicals, move him to fresh air immediately and administer rescue breathing if necessary. If someone has swallowed chemicals, follow the first aid instructions on the MSDS.

## WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR

Wear the right protective clothing and equipment to protect you from chemicals. Your personal protective equipment (PPE) must be made of the right material to guard against the particular chemical hazard.

Use your PPE correctly. Examine it before each wearing for any defects such as rips or tears. It must fit properly and be comfortable enough so that you will wear it as needed. Fasten it correctly.

Clean the PPE, where appropriate, after each use. Remove and dispose of contaminated clothing according to instructions. Unfasten the clothing with your gloves on, and remove clothing from the top down. Keep contaminated clothing away from your street clothes and separate from family laundry. Don't use contaminated clothing or equipment again until it has been cleaned properly.

## MSDS

A material safety data sheet (MSDS) is your guide to chemical hazards and protective measures. It's organized like this:

- Material Identification
- Ingredients and Hazards
- Physical Data
- Health Hazard Information
- First Aid Measures
- Fire and Explosion Data
- Preventive Measures

## WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

Splashing a small amount of a chemical onto your skin can cause death within minutes as it is absorbed into your bloodstream.

Inhaling a chemical can cause permanent damage to your throat and lungs.

Exposure to a chemical day after day can result in cancer developing years later.

A spilled chemical ignited by a cutting torch can result in a devastating explosion.

These are just some of the things that can go wrong where chemicals are used or stored. However, accidents can be prevented through proper training, careful attention to safe work practices and correct use of personal protective equipment. When in doubt about a chemical, always ask your supervisor for advice.

## IN THE KNOW

For your own safety, you need to learn about the hazardous chemicals in your work area. Here's how:

- Read the labels on chemical containers.
- Read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for any chemical you use.
- Take part in any chemical safety training programs available to you.

Get acquainted with the hazards and precautions before you use, handle or store any chemical.